

## *Update from the Department of Early Learning July 2011*

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### **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

This month, a new program joins the DEL family: the Medicaid Treatment Child Care program. This program was transferred to us in the 2011-2013 state operating budget. I visited one site—Childhaven in Seattle—in June to learn more. This program offers intensive therapeutic child care to some very vulnerable families—ones struggling with domestic violence, drug abuse and other issues that impact healthy child and family development.

- The program includes several important components, with an intense focus on strengthening family relationships and improving parenting skills. It also offers home visitation, door-to-door transportation, developmental screenings, and therapy delivered through play, music and art.

We welcome this program to DEL—as I always say, children are children first, no matter their challenges or strengths. This program belongs at DEL. We will add information about the Medicaid Treatment Child Care program on our website in the coming weeks.

Also last month, I had the pleasure of leading DEL's first-ever webinar for licensed child care providers. We went over the exciting progress made in child care licensing during the 2011 legislative session, and then took questions. I appreciate all the licensees who took time out of their evenings to attend. A copy of the PowerPoint used in the webinar is now posted online on our Information for Providers section under "Top Downloads." We are working on a question and answer document from the webinar and will post that and a recording of the webinar in the coming weeks.

And finally, I got to visit the new Fort Vancouver Library (see photo of me playing in the children's section!). This wonderful community resource reminded me why Washington is considered a leader in early learning: Along one wall were early learning materials from a variety of sources, including Thrive by Five Washington's recently launched "Love. Talk. Play." parent awareness campaign. Our state is second to none when it comes to pooling resources and focusing on our youngest learners.

Enjoy summer with the early learners in your life!

—*Bette Hyde, Director*



DEL Director Bette Hyde visits the new Fort Vancouver Library in June  
*Photo courtesy of Fort Vancouver Regional Library District*

### **Draft Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge requirements released**

The federal departments of education and health and human services released proposed competition requirements for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge grant on July 1. The requirements are online at [www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary](http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/elc-draft-summary) and available for public comment until July 11. The competition focuses on several key priorities, including quality rating systems, kindergarten-readiness assessments, public-private partnerships and pre-k-third grade alignment.

Washington is ready to race! Visit DEL's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge web page to read the latest on our state's progress on applying for the grant: [www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop/)

## Legislature OKs portable background checks for child care employees

*Current child care licensees must contribute \$45 to help build, maintain registry*

The 2011 Legislature passed House Bill 1903, sponsored by Rep. Tina Orwall, creating a three-year portable background check for licensed child care employees. This portable background check will have benefits for both child care licensees and their employees:

- Employees have a three-year “portable” clearance card, which they can use to work in more than one facility during those three years.
- Licensees will not have to wait for background checks to clear before allowing new hires to work unsupervised with children in care.

The cost to build and maintain the registry will be partially covered by a one-time \$45 fee of current licensed child care providers. The fee is due to DEL by September 1, 2011. The \$45 fee is tied to the license—it is NOT per employee.

DEL will be mailing licensees a notice about the one-time \$45 fee in late July. The portable background check registry will be up and running by July 1, 2012.

More information will be posted in July on the child care licensing fees section of the DEL website:

[www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/fees.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/fees.aspx)

### Licensing fees increase

Annual licensing fees will increase as part of the 2011-2013 state operating budget. As of July 1, 2011:

- Family home child care - \$30 per year
- Child care centers and school-age center programs - \$125 for the first 12 children, plus \$12 for each additional child up to the facility's licensed capacity.

This fee increase will be reflected on the invoice licensees receive 90 days prior to the anniversary date of your license. If you have already received an invoice because your fee is due in July, August or September, a supplemental invoice will be sent to you with details on how to pay this fee increase.

## Summer meals available for families

More than 450,000

Washington children were enrolled in the free and reduced-price meal program this school year.

The Summer Meals Program helps ensure families have access to healthy food even when school is out.

WithinReach and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction have an online search tool to help families find the closest meal sites, program hours and more:

<https://resources.parenthelp123.org/service/summer-meals>

A multilingual Family Food Hotline is also available at 1.888.436.6392.



## CDC hosts immunization meeting

Parents, health care providers, health plans, and others are invited to give input on national vaccine policy at a July 12 meeting in Shoreline hosted by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The meeting is one of four around the nation CDC is hosting to include public input in setting the recommended childhood vaccine schedule. Participants may be eligible for a stipend, and parents or guardians with child care expenses may qualify for an additional stipend.

Register online at

<http://keystone.org/registration/seattle> or by calling 1.866.276.7083.

## Seasonal Child Care program resumes July 1

*Families now apply through DSHS*

The Seasonal Child Care (SCC) program resumes on July 1, 2011, with some changes to the program. SCC helps families pay for child care while they work in agricultural settings. The program was suspended due to lack of funds in December 2010.

### There are some changes to the program:

- Families apply with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), not through local community organizations.
- Families are not required to earn at least 50 percent of their income from seasonal agriculture work.
- Families can prove income eligibility by providing DSHS with:
  - Three months of paystubs; or,
  - Most current W-2 tax form showing gross wages; or
  - The DSHS Employment Verification Form.
- Children must be legal residents of the United States and Washington State.
- Eligible families must cooperate with the DSHS Division of Child Support as applicable unless there is “good cause” not to do so.
- Child care providers will receive child care authorizations directly from DSHS. Families do not receive a “child care plan.”



### Some program requirements remain the same:

- SCC is for eligible families working in seasonal farmwork like cultivating, harvesting or processing fruit trees and crops in Washington State.
- Eligible families must have income at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). The eligibility chart is online at:  
[www.del.wa.gov/publications/subsidy/docs/Subsidy\\_Eligibility\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/subsidy/docs/Subsidy_Eligibility_Chart.pdf)
- Eligible families must live in one of these counties: Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, Skagit, Walla Walla, Whatcom or Yakima.
- Eligible families may not receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance.

Visit [www.del.wa.gov/care/help/seasonal.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/help/seasonal.aspx) to read more and to download a SCC brochure with information for families and communities (the brochure is currently in English, and is being translated to Spanish. That will be posted shortly).

Families can apply in-person at their local DSHS office, by calling the DSHS Customer Service Call Center at 1.877.501.2233 or online at [www.washingtonconnection.org](http://www.washingtonconnection.org)

## Early learning technical work group progress report now available

The work group created in 2010 under Senate Bill 6759 has submitted a required progress report to the Quality Education Council (QEC) and the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC). Find the report online at [www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx)

The work group is charged with developing a plan that examines opportunities and barriers to at least two options for a comprehensive voluntary program of early learning: as part of basic education or as an entitlement program executed by statute or constitutional amendment.

The July 1 progress report outlines research done so far by the work group, including:

- A comparison of existing state and federally funded preschool programs in Washington.
- A look at prekindergarten programs in other states.
- A review of the implications of a preschool program that is part of basic education versus one that is an entitlement program.
- A review of existing preschool expansion plans and recommendations.

A final report is due to the QEC and ELAC on November 1, 2011. The QEC must then, with input from ELAC, submit to the Legislature its recommendations for a voluntary program of early learning by January 1, 2012.

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## Several early learning laws take effect July 22

- **Nonexpiring child care licenses.** Helps streamline monitoring visits so that there is no longer a full renewal visit every three years. Monitoring visits will continue at current time frame: at least once every 18 months for family homes, at least once every 12 months for centers. To qualify for a nonexpiring license, providers must be “in good standing” and submit: annual licensing fee, declaration indicating intent to continue or cease operating a licensed program, declaration of compliance with licensing rules, background check application on schedule.
- **Unlicensed child care.** Doubles the civil penalty DEL can assess for providing unlicensed child care in a family home to \$150 per day. (Center penalties remain at \$250 per day). Requires DEL to post online information about unlicensed providers who have not moved toward licensure within 30 days of DEL notification. DEL will use its Child Care Check tool for this.
- **New immunization exemption law.** Makes changes to how a parent or guardian exempts a child from immunization requirements for school or child care. Parents can still claim a medical, religious, or philosophical exemption, but the new law requires them to get information on the benefits and risks of immunization from a licensed health care provider before they claim an exemption.



## QRIS moves forward in Washington

### *‘Early adopters’ will be first to use final QRIS model*

After a successful two-year field test administered by our partners at Thrive by Five Washington, DEL is ready to begin implementing and expanding Washington’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) statewide over time. We have learned a great deal about how to define and measure child care quality, the incentives and supports necessary to assist child care providers in improving the quality of care offered to children and families and the importance of using existing partnerships to build a system that is sustainable, accountable and nimble.

Washington State Department of  
Early Learning



Washington Quality Rating and Improvement System roles

The timing of beginning to implement a QRIS could not be better. Having a strong statewide QRIS is a key strategy of the 10 year statewide Early Learning Plan and will make our state more competitive in the upcoming Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge.

During the field test, we learned some key lessons:

- **Coaching, training and incentives make a difference.** In a short amount of time, facilities were able to increase their rating using evidence based measures of quality.
- **Simple is better.** By simplifying the quality standards using only indicators that are evidence based and supported by research, the cost to administer the system is reduced and there is greater buy-in from the field.
- **Infrastructure is crucial.** There are many roles within a QRIS and it is important to identify those roles and the entities who will manage them quickly building upon current work and expertise.

Based on results from the field test as well as national data, DEL will move to the following administrative structure in fiscal year 2012. This structure is common to most QRIS around the nation:

- Q (Quality)** —> All agencies promote child care quality.
- R (Rating)** —> The University of Washington is the lead agency for evaluation, assessment and rating assignment.
- I (Improvement)** —> The Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network is the lead agency for coordinating improvement activities including coaching, technical assistance, professional development and training.
- S (System)** —> DEL is the lead administrative agency for systems development and integration.

In August, DEL staff will be traveling around the state to meet with “early adopters”—up to 60 providers who applied to participate in QRIS during fiscal year 2012.